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COMPUTER NETWORK FOR HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS IN LOW-RESOURCE ENVIRONMENTS

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Health care organizations in low-resource environments such as in countries with developing economies, suffer from inadequate medical facilities, a shortage of health care professionals and equipment, as well as limited or no access to health care information. Information technologies and the Internet may offer a solution to improving the delivery of health care services. In this project, an organizational computer network is developed for health care organizations in low-resource environments. The network consists of a central server, wireless access points, a dial-up connection to an Internet Service Provider, and features the use of open-source software applications. The wireless access points enable mobile devices such as personal digital assistants (PDAs) and wireless portable computers to disseminate administrative and health care information, and acquire reference resources and decision support tools. The poster session presents the network that has been developed. The use of open source software, such as OpenEMR for electronic medical records, and CommuniGate (a web-based email server), is also shown. Examples of access to the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and other knowledge sources are shown. Challenges to developing the network are discussed.